

January-February 2019

Volume 22, Issue 01

2019 Schedule of Meetings:

Mar. 6th, Apr. 3rd, May 1, June 5th, July 3rd, Aug. 7th, Sept. 4th, Oct. 2nd, Nov. 6th, and Dec. 4th. No meetings January and February.

Doors open at 6:00 p.m., meeting starts 7 p.m., at the Rockwood Public Library (inside Eramosa Community Centre) at 85 Christie Street (near corner Christie Street and Main Street North Wellington Road 27, Rockwood, On. NoB 2K0.

2019 Annual Membership Fee:

Regular \$10
Couple \$12
Junior (14 to age 18) \$5
Under 14 Free

Membership / Treasurer Contact:

c/o: Scott Douglas, 273 Mill St. E., Acton, On. L7J 1J7,

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NEXT MEETING DATE:
WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 6TH, 2019
DOORS OPEN 6 P.M.
MEETING STARTS
****7 P.M.****

THEME:
COIN DISCOVERIES

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

This is your winter issue newsletter for January-February. You will still receive your March newsletter which will contain the auction list for that meeting.

Our next meeting is **Wednesday, March 6th, 2019, AT **7 P.M.** (DOORS OPEN 6 P.M.)!** We will show a short video (around 10 min.) of the **top 10 recent coin discoveries** in the world. After which, we would like to hear your stories about your own coin discoveries or discoveries of folks you know or read about. Discoveries could be by metal-detecting, or simply stumbling across something while appraising an estate or at a flea market or show. **Scott Douglas** made an interesting discovery at a market, and **Mel Brown** certainly has had fun at digs.

Our President **Scott Douglas** is undergoing surgery in January, and we wish him the best for a speedy recovery. We know there have been a couple of delays in the scheduling of this surgery, and that he's anxious to have it completed.

If you were unable to renew your 2019 membership by our December 2018 meeting, be sure to do so at our March 2019 meeting (our first meeting in the new year).

Bring along a friend or two to our next SWCS meeting, enjoy free refreshments and smiles, share the FUN and LAUGHTER with the ONA Club of the Year!

This winter, why not check out a few shows:

2019-Jan 26-27: Annual Canadian Association of Numismatic Dealers (CAND) Convention & Coin Show at Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, 116 King St. W., Hamilton, ON, L8P 4V3. Saturday 10-4 and Sunday 10-3. Admission Saturday \$4 adults, \$2 seniors, under age 12 free, and Sunday admission is free for all. Contact **Tom Kennedy** phone 519-271-8825, email cand@cogeco.ca, website <http://www.cand.org>. **Jeffrey Hoare Auctions** will host its Numismatic and Military Sale No. 128 in conjunction with the show.

2019-Feb 3: Paris Coin & Collectibles Show at Paris Fairgrounds, 139 Silver St., Paris, ON, N3L 1V4. Hours 9-4, \$4 admission includes draw ticket for a gold coin. Hot and cold food and drinks available at the show. Contact **Jared Stapleton** phone 647-403-7334, email pariscoinshow@gmail.com, website <http://www.pariscoinshow.com>. **Geoffrey Bell Auctions** holding auction Friday, February 2nd at Grand Ballroom, Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton, 20 Fen Ridge Ct., Brantford, ON, N3V 1G2 5:00 EST (viewing 10-4), lot pick-up available at the Paris Coin & Collectibles Show.

2019-Feb 10: 10th Classic Coins & Paper Money Show at the Best Western Plus, 930 Burnham St., Cobourg, ON, K9A 2X9, hours 9:30-4:30, free admission and parking. Contact Paul Harding phone 905-375-5712, email coinmanph@yahoo.com, website <http://classiccoinsandbanknotes.com>.



South Wellington
Coin Society **founded**
in 1997



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Send pictures in jpg,
files in doc, xls, pdf,
wpd, or email body.



Articles of the upcoming
newsletters are due to the Editor
by no later than the 15th of the
current month.

Advertising space will be
accommodated where space is
available.

SWCS:
Was founded in March 1997.
This medal was issued 2015.



**SWCS is recipient of
BOTH RCNA Club of
Year and Newsletter of
Year Awards.**



South Wellington Coin Club founded 1997

SWCS EXECUTIVE

Term of Office: **July 1, 2018—June 30, 2021 (3 yrs)**

Board of Directors (elected)

(sets officers' guidelines, but not involved in day-to-day operations EXCEPT responsible for ALL education programs and looks after ALL contracts for venues and insurance)

Chairman / Director: **Scott Douglas**

Directors: **Mel Brown, Peter Becker, Ernie Blair, Garry George, John Semedo, Lowell Wierstra** (ljwierstra@rogers.com, **519-824-6534**)

Director Emeritus: **Robert Zmija** (Lifetime Member #1)

Director of Youth Services: **Peter Horne deus** (YN)

Officers (elected)

(run the day-to-day operations)

President: **Scott Douglas**, sdouglas333@gmail.com, **519-853-3812**
(also is club archivist, historian, and looks after medals)

Past-President: **John Semedo**, johnsemedo99@gmail.com, **519-821-6379**

Vice-President: **Mike Hollingshead**, cholling@uoguelph.ca, **519-823-2646**

Treasurer: **Scott Douglas**

(includes all revenues generated from membership dues, meetings, and shows; and looks after advertising)

Other Non-Elected IMPORTANT Club Roles

Publications: **Judy Blackman**, jblackman@rogers.com
(includes flyers, other club notices, newsletters since Oct 5 2011, public website liaison, private website webmaster, executive agendas and minutes) Newsletter / Flyer Distribution: **Linda Blair**

ALL Multi-Media Needs: **John Semedo**

ALL Draws and Membership Meeting Notes: **John Semedo** and **Mike Hollingshead**

Show Bourse: **Mike Hollingshead** and **Lowell Wierstra**
Social Media Show Advertising: **Andrew Fedora**

Auction Chairman: **Lowell Wierstra**
Auctioneers: **Mike Hollingshead** and **Scott Douglas**
Auction Runners: available executive and other members.

Hospitality: **Linda Blair, Mike Hollingshead**, and any other member available

"Giving Back to Community" Liaison:
Heather Hoddinott

Meeting Room Set-up and Clean-up:
All members present



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Club Report & News reported by Mike Hollingshead, and photos by John Semedo

The SWCS meeting held on **December 5th, 2018** with **27** regular members and **2** young numismatists present plus guests. Good to see a number of charter members out! Scott welcomed new YN member **Ethan Tarzwell**.

Members' Attendance Draw: Gary Fedora was shocked to win \$10. March's attendance draw will be for \$5.

Paid-Up 2019 Membership Draw: A one-year *Canadian Coin News* subscription (print or digital option) was won by **Rick Dupuis**.

The **King Arthur's Treasure:** A whopping **155** items equivalent (including \$13 in loonies) was won by **Dwayne Spears**.

Daytona Draw: It was so funny. **Scott Douglas** had our newest member, 9-year-old **Ethan Tarzwell** pick the Daytona ticket and Ethan picked Scott's ticket out of the 46 tickets in the box. A conundrum because Scott said he knew what was in the envelopes! He had **Andrew Strachan** choose the envelope for him (#17) and then it went for auction to a bid by **Lowell Wierstra** for **\$31**. Scott then asked **Andrew Fedora** whether Scott should accept the money or the envelope. Andrew said, "Take the cash!"

Lowell won the envelope which contained the GOLD COIN!

Scott was a good sport about it, he was glad for Lowell because Lowell had sold an envelope previously that contained the gold and glad that someone went home with the gold for Christmas.

It gets better. **Andrew Strachan**, who won the gold coin last month, brought in the coin and gave it to Ethan as a gift!!! He said, for him it was just a coin but he felt that Ethan could appreciate the coin for years to come and learn the spirit of SWCS.

Congratulations Gary, Rick, Dwayne, Scott and Lowell!

Food Bank: The **East-Wellington Advisory Group—Community Services (EWAG)** representative **Jane Wahl** came to our meeting to accept all of the food and household items donated by SWCS members and \$300 in \$10 WalMart gift cards donated by the club for the Food Bank to distribute in whatever manner they deem most appropriate. Jane gave a short presentation on the importance of helping those who have fallen through the cracks and how appreciated the SWCS support has been over the last five years. It was evident that Jane and her colleagues have real dedication and love for their community and the support by SWCS was part of local community action. SWCS members assisted Jane with loading her car with the goodies and as in recent years, Jane stayed to enjoy the meeting. Thank you Jane for your dedication and empathy in the local area.

SWCS also delivered a cheque for \$100 to the **County of Wellington** earmarked for the **Rockwood Library**. The staff there are always very helpful and are often called upon to open up our room or assist with A-V problems. Big thanks to the library staff! We also gave \$200 to the Royal City Church Life Centre, Guelph.

Youth Director Honored: **Mel Brown** made a special presentation of a complete set of Canadian Loonies in third-party graded holders to our Director of Youth Services / Member **Peter Horne-Deus**. Peter has been a member of SWCS for many years and Mel wanted to reward Peter for all his dedication at club events.

A big thank you to Mel and Andrew for their recognition of Young Numismatists during the Holiday season.

December's Educational Program: SWCS members **Robb McPherson** and his wife **Lisa** came up from Brantford to present a very complete and inspired presentation on *Casino Chips, Tokens and Related Items*. The hobby of Casino Chips is very well organized with a number of luxurious print and digital catalogues.

The research and maintenance of their websites is really quite something and SWCS members are welcome to browse through the sites to see what's available. Robb is the co-editor of their club's newsletter and it is amazing how well the club is in their publicity and archiving!

Thank you Robb and Lisa for your talk, PowerPoint and display. There were some seriously heavy one pound silver chips on display!

Coming to SWCS in Rockwood!: Your educational presentations scheduled are:

March, 2019 – **Coin Discoveries:** We will show a short video (around 10 min.) of the top 10 recent coin discoveries in the world. After which, we would like to hear your stories about your own coin discoveries or discoveries of folks you know or read about. Discoveries could be by metal-detecting, or simply stumbling across something while appraising an estate or at a flea market or show. Scott one time made an interesting discovery at a market, and Mel certainly has had fun at digs.

April—**Wonderful Banknotes:** We will show a short video (around 6 min.) of the Wonderful Banknotes of the world (includes Canadian). After which, we would like to see banknotes from your own collections that you feel are wonderful, and hear your thoughts about them.

(Note: Mike will be in Cuba and miss the Mar-Apr meetings)

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Club Report & News reported by Mike Hollingshead, and photos by John Semedo

May—**Topic to be advised:** Michael Dailous

June—**Topic to be advised:** Ron Cheek

July-October: **LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER PRESENTERS**

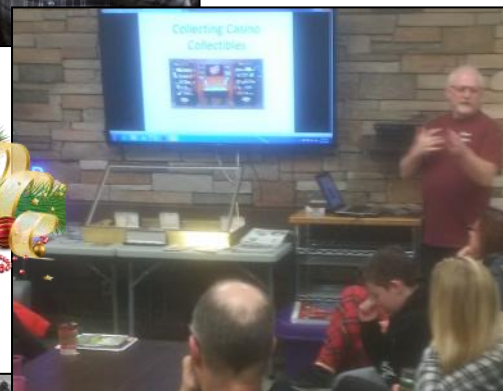
November— **War Memoir:** Dave Mowat (once again there will be a connection to his family)

December—**Christmas (or New Year Theme):** Scott Douglas
PLUS Food Bank presentation

Thank you for your Volunteerism: Adrian Zmija brought a rich assortment of delicious homemade cookies to help with our snacks. Linda Blair ran the coffee and refreshments with some help by Andrew Strachan and Mike Hollingshead. Thank you Linda for the work you do to provide the complimentary coffee and snacks every meeting. and your elves. Also thank you to Lowell Wierstra, John Semedo and Mike Hollingshead for handling ticket sales, and John for looking after multi-media set-up and photography. Thank you to Heather Hoddinott for sending the “needs list” for the Food Bank and arranging for Jane to come out to our meeting.

Auction: Mike Hollingshead was our Auctioneer and Ethan Tarzwell was our runner — so nice for a new member to jump right into volunteering. Thank you to our Auction Coordinator / SWCS Director Lowell Wierstra for putting together the auction lots. A big thank you to all our bidders, too! Lowell welcomes your consignments, and remember we keep our consignment fees very low, if not the lowest in Ontario. The SWCS commission charged to consignors: Sold for under \$20, auction fee is 25 cents and items sold for over \$20 fee is \$1. Pretty simple. No buyers premium, no sales tax. Kindly submit your completed consignment form with the items you are consigning.

Close of Meeting: The SWCS executive wish all its members and guests a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year; and, reminded our next meeting is March as we take January and February off due to the winter weather in this area. The entire SWCS folks wished President Scott Douglas best wishes and a speedy recovery for his hip-joint replacement coming up in mid-January. Let's hope that it was worth the wait!



In Memory of Our Friend Clive



CLIVE ERNEST CRESSWELL (12-07-1941— 12-06-2018)

SWCS / WCS member and friend Clive Cresswell passed away the day before his 77th birthday, at his home in Markdale (he was formerly of Newmarket / his birthplace and London) surrounded by his family. He is survived by SWCS / WCS member **Robert "Bob" Zmija** (his father-in-law, who turned 97 in Nov. 2018), his beloved wife **Marlene**, daughter **Sharon Rose** (Shane) of Pfefferlaw, and son **Kevin Cresswell** (London), and his brother **Peter Cresswell** (UK). Clive, a loving grandfather, will be dearly missed by **Michael Emery** (Miranda), **Laura Porter** (Roy), **Cassandra Huyben** (Darcy), and **Melissa Conrad** (Randy), as well as thirteen great-grandchildren. Bob lived many years with Clive and Marlene until recent years when he's resided in a long-term-care centre in Fergus.

Clive enjoyed his retirement having left a career in Civil Engineering. That's doesn't mean he didn't like to keep busy. Clive could be seen for several years driving his father-in-law to many coin shows and coin club meetings, as well as conventions. He is Past-President of the Markdale & District Horticultural Society. The Markdale & District Horticultural Society kicked off its 100th Anniversary year celebrations on January 14, 2012, with a "Come and Go Tea" featuring historical photographs, newspaper clippings, and minutes books for the past century. *On the far right* of this picture, Clive is holding a certificate give to the Society by MP Larry Miller).



Many will recall the several battles Clive fought with cancer as it returned over and over again. Despite this, he kept an upbeat attitude and a good sense of humour and was always pleasant to be around. Clive will be missed!

CRESSWELL COLLIERY (NORTH DERBYSHIRE) 1896-1991



This 33 mm brass embossed pit check (miner's coal-mining token) is from Creswell Colliery. It is embossed on one side only, but the number 2143 is stamped on both sides. On this particular check, the name is misspelled as "Cresswell". There are at least a dozen other examples of these square pit checks, and all have "Cresswell".



All the round ones have "Creswell" as per 119 shown here.

Information from a 1952 accident report, about the 1950 mining disaster:

Creswell Colliery, formerly owned by the Bolsover Colliery Company Limited, was taken over by the National Coal Board in 1947. It is included in the No. 4 Sub-Area of No. 1 Area of the East Midlands Division, and is situated in Derbyshire near the Nottinghamshire border and lies about six miles southwest of Worksop.

The mine has two circular shafts, each 18 feet in diameter and completed in 1896, which were sunk to work the Top Hard seam at a depth of 444 $\frac{1}{4}$ yards. The High Hazel seam was intersected by the shafts at 329 yards from the surface. In 1939, for exploratory reasons, the upcast (or No. 2) shaft was sunk to the Low Main seam at a depth of 736 yards. A cross-measure drift was then driven from the Top Hard seam to the Low Main seam and a connection was made with No. 2 shaft. In 1933 a cross-measure drift was driven at 1 in 3 from the Top Hard up to the High Hazel seam to enable faces in this seam to be opened out. Output from the High Hazel seam was gradually increased to replace the declining output from the Top Hard seam. Work ceased in the Top Hard in 1941, and, thereafter, all the output came from the High Hazel, so that at the time of the accident an extensive area of this seam had been worked out.

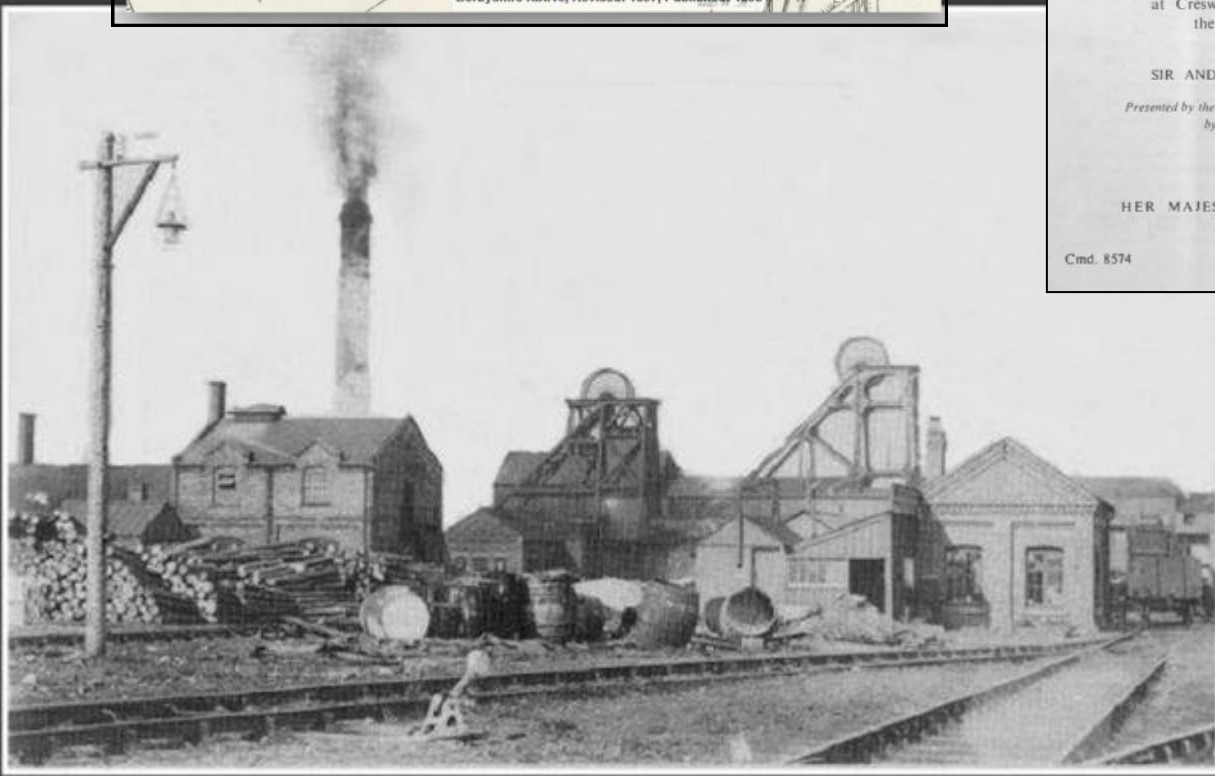
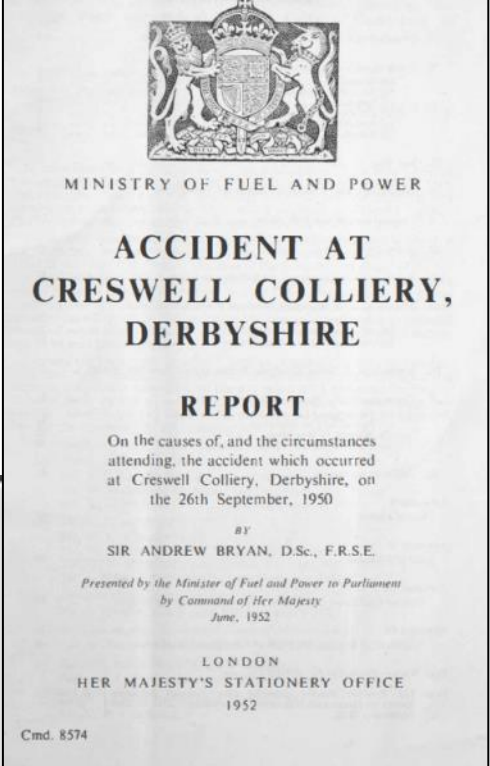
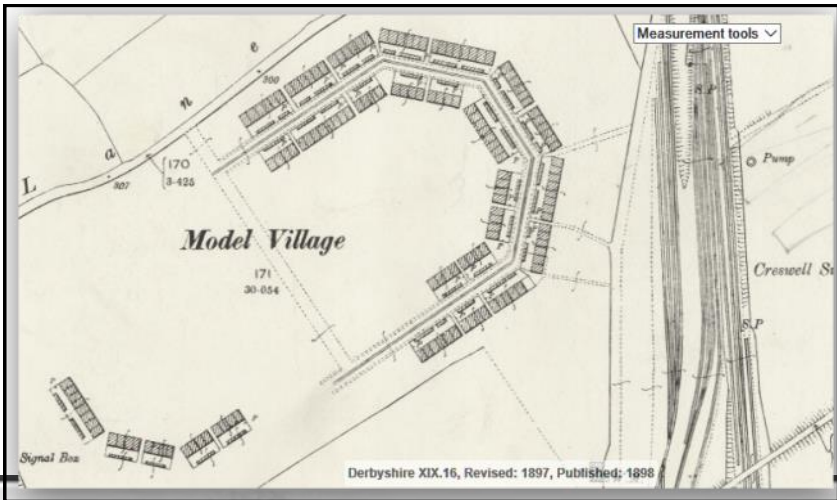
The High Hazel seam has an average inclination of 1 in 30, is about 4 feet 6 inches thick, and was worked by advancing longwall methods in three main producing districts, known as the North-West, South-East and South-West Districts. There were 1,144 men employed underground and 355 on the surface. During the three months prior to the fire, the work output was just over 14,000 tons, about half of which came from the South-West District. The coal from all three districts was transported to the pit bottom by trunk-belt conveyors and wound at the downcast shaft. Coal filling and winding were done on the day and afternoon shifts. Repair and maintenance work was done on all three shifts, but mostly on the night-shift. The general sequence of work on the coal faces was: cut, fill, pack and turnover.

All parties agreed that the fire started at the No. 2 transfer point about 3:45 a.m. on the 26th September, 1950, when 232 persons were underground, of whom 133 were employed in the South-West District beyond the scene of the fire. Shortly before the fire started, however, two workmen had left the district, thus leaving 131 persons inbye at th time. Of these, 51 persons escaped by way of the return airway. The remaining 80 persons lost their lives. They were later certified as having died from carbon monoxide poisoning.

During the day-shift of the 25 September, it was observed that No. 2 trunk belt was scored. At the beginning of the afternoon-shift that day, J. R. Hindley, a belt-maintenance man, was called to examine it. He found a groove, about 6 inches from the belt edge on the supplies track side, extending along the belt for a distance of nearly 300 yards. In no p lace was the belt cut through but for a short length the groove had penetrated about two-thirds of the thickness of the belt. Along with others, Hindley examined the conveyor throughout its length but nothing was found that would account for the grooving. The conveyor was started up and Hindley inspected it at intervals during the shift. His last inspection of the belt was made at 8:30 p.m. A full shift of coal had been transported without mishap and arrangements were made for Hindley to stay over-time to repair the belt. These arrangements were cancelled, however, because H. Godfrey, the overman in charge of the district on the night-shift, finding that a length of coal on No. 65's face had not been filled off, gave instructions for the belt to continue running until the coal was cleared.

When Jos. Morris, the No. 3 transfer point attendant, arrived at this place of work at the start of the night-shift about 11 p .m., he examined the No. 2 belt and estimated that the grooving extended for upwards of 200 yards and that for a length of 6 to 8 yards the belt was cut through. He said he was able to push his hand through the slit. The condition of the belt had clearly worsened since Hindley had made his inspection at 8:30 p.m. Nevertheless, the belt was started up and nothing untoward was observed until 3:10 a.m. when Morris signalled to W. H. Hird, the attendant who was stationed at the telephone 70 yards on the outbye side of No. 2 transfer point, to stop the No. 2 belt. Hird did so and Morris telephoned Hird via the pit-bottom exchange and told him that the belt was torn and had a "trailing end." He arranged to travel outbye while Hird travelled inbye so that they could find where the damage to the belt had started. Morris set off and when about 400 yards from No. 2 transfer point he encountered smoke, and when still 150 yards away he saw fire at the transfer chute and flames between the chute and the sidewall of the roadway.

Hird travelled inbye no further than the 70 yards to the No. 2 transfer point where he saw the transfer hopper full of torn belting, looking, as he said, as "if three or four men each side... had been laying it out." He returned to his telephone, informed the man in charge of the pit-bottom telephone exchange what had occurred and asked to be put in contact with Godfrey, the night overman in charge of the South-West District. During this time the No. 1 belt continued to run although



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Hird stated that he had signalled for it to stop. A few minutes later Hird saw fire in the chute at the transfer point and again telephoned to the pit-bottom to ask for the electric power to be cut off and help to be summoned. He had just completed this telephone call when Jos. Morris arrived and asked him if he knew the transfer point was on fire. Hird said he did and looked at his watch. It was then 3:45 p.m. From the time No. 2 belt was stopped until the fire was discovered, Morris had travelled nearly 1,000 yards, including 350 yards up a drift rising at 1 in 9, examining the conveyor structure and belt on the way. Hird, although the first to see the fire, made no effective effort whereas Morris, on the other hand, as soon as he arrived, asked about the portable fire-extinguishers. There were two at the nearby 59's junction. He applied the first with little effect, and the second failed to function.

Immediately on receipt of Hird's telephone message about the fire, F. Kirk, the pit-bottom telephone-exchange attendant, sent telephone warnings of the fire into the South-West District and calls for fire-fighting teams from other parts of the mine. The manager and undermanager were also informed. It was now 4 a.m. Messages were then sent for the Central Rescue Brigades at Chesterfield, senior local officials of the National Coal Board, H. M. Inspectors of Mines and officials of the mine-workers' Unions. When the undermanager got to the pit, he spoke to the manager at his home by telephone, and then went underground. Having received assurances that the inbye workmen had been warned of the fire and were on their way outbye, he went straight to the scene of the fire. There he found that some members of the pit fire-fighting teams, led by J. Rodda, overman in charge of the North-West District, had been in action since shortly after 4 a.m. They had travelled in the "Paddy" in the return airway, taking with them a supply of fire-hoses and nozzles. The fire-fighters at once coupled up their hoses to the water main but got little more than a trickle of water which was quite an inefficient system. Efforts with the hoses were described at the Inquiry as "just like standing in a garden watering flowers." The water supply at normal quantity and pressure had unexpectedly and, for the time being at least, unaccountably failed. Repeated telephone messages for an increased supply brought no improvement. As soon as the undermanager arrived he also telephoned instructions for the source of the trouble to be fully investigated without delay. It was now about 5:15 a.m.

In the meantime, supplies of portable fire-extinguishers, sand and stone dust were collected and sent to the scene of the fire and used very effectively. So much so, indeed, that the impression was gained that the main fire had been got under control, with the result that a message was sent to the surface that the fire was nearly extinguished. Unhappily, this was not the case. The steam and smoke in the roadway had reduced the visibility to practically nil and had masked the spread of the fire along the roadway, an extension which, no doubt, had been accelerated when the burning No. 2 belt — still under tension — broke and the burning end sprang inbye.

At 5:20 a.m. a team of trained rescue brigade men from Chesterfield Rescue Station arrived at the fire. But because of the lack of adequate supply of water under pressure, they were unable to do any really effective fire-fighting work. While the other fire-fighters continued their efforts with the portable fire-extinguishers and the little water still available, the rescue brigade men donned their liquid-air apparatus and tried to get past and ahead of the fire in an attempt to prevent it from spreading further inbye. But the heat was too intense and the attempt failed.

The water position was not rectified until a considerable time after the arrival of the colliery engineer about 5:10 a.m.; but by the time a reasonable supply of water was available, the fire in the chute at No. 2 transfer point had burned itself out, and the fire had spread a long way inbye. Water was still necessary, however, to cool down the hot material and smouldering wood. Another attempt was made to reach the advancing fire by working forward along the roadway, but because of damage to roof supports, the efforts, the effect of water on the strata and the deterioration of roof and sides, conditions became too dangerous to allow the attempts to continue. Later, temporary supports were set in the hope of reaching the advancing fire, but only 60 yards of roadway were recovered when, the erection of the seals became essential and stopped all further fire-fighting and recovery work.

While all this had been going on, several men from the inbye workings in the South-West District had come out safely by way of the main-return airway. And then, about 5 a.m., another inbye workman, J. W. Turner, who had been working on 65's face, came out of 59's loader gate. He had travelled by the main return to 59's right-hand return, over the overcast on the main intake and then along 59's right side face. On his way he had opened the doors at the overcast and saw the fire raging underneath it. He was in a distressed condition and reported that there were more men behind him. The fire had thus travelled at least 125 yards inbye in about 1 ¼ hours.

It was now realized that the inbye men were not getting out as expected and rescue teams were at once sent in to explore the main return. They found one body about 500 yards inbye from 59's left return gate and brought it to the fresh-air base.

Artificial respiration was tried but there was no response. Eventually, the rescue teams brought out two other bodies and reported that they had seen ten more.

By this time, the smoke in the main return at 59's left side return gate was extremely dense and had a very bad effect upon the eyes of the rescue men. The atmosphere was so deadly that it was impossible to conceive of anyone being alive in the inbye workings. It was decided that, except for an exploration of the main return towards the shaft, rescue work should be stopped for the time being. The return airway was explored towards the shaft bottom but the rescue team reached the stable slit without finding anyone. When rescue operations could safely resume, in addition to recovering 47 bodies, the rescue men located 27 others, leaving six more to be found. The youngest deceased was 25 and the oldest 63. The pit-checks would have been very important in identification of workers.

What are Pit-Checks?

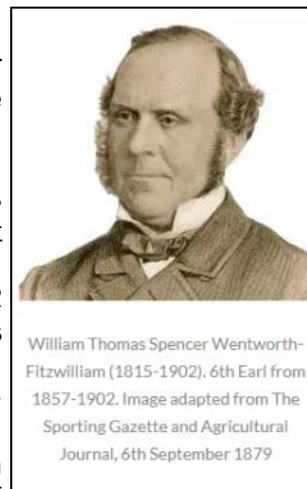
The use of Pit-Checks is believed to have commenced in Britain c. 1860/70 and continued into the 1980/90s when they were eventually replaced by the introduction of electronic swipe cards. Pit-Checks are one of the most commonly encountered forms of mining memorabilia. The total number of different examples ranges well into the thousands. Although most of them are less than 100 years old, there are still several types for which the original purpose or method of use remains unknown. This makes their study all the more interesting.

Pit-Checks were produced in a variety of different materials and designs. However, in common most normally bear hand-stamped identification numbers in the centre of their obverse fields. They are typically manufactured in either brass, zinc or aluminum although plastic / bakelite and leather example are also known. The majority of Pit-Checks have embossed or incised uniface designs and are encountered in several different shapes including circular, square, rectangular, hexagonal or octagonal.



Possibly the earliest true colliery checks (lamp or possibly even time checks) known of are those used at Elsecar Low Colliery in South Yorkshire. Few of these examples remain in existence. These earliest known checks are of a brass embossed design and are unusual (although not unique) in that they bear a date in their legend. Their obverse design carries the legend ELSECAR LOW PIT while the reverse legend simply reads

EFW 1882. The latter initials refer to the colliery's then owner Earl Fitzwilliam. Other than being a possible date of issue NMMA researchers have so far failed to find any other significance to the date on these checks. Instead of bearing the usual hand-stamped collier identification numbers, the early Elsecar Low Pit checks each carry two hand-stamped initials. These have since been shown (via reference to an original 1881 manpower ledger for the pit) to represent the initials of the miner to whom the check was originally issued. In this respect the checks are apparently unique.



William Thomas Spencer Wentworth-Fitzwilliam (1815-1902). 6th Earl from 1857-1902. Image adapted from The Sporting Gazette and Agricultural Journal, 6th September 1879

It is probable that the use of lamp / time checks pre-dates 1882 by at least a decade or two. Certainly by the early 1900s they were in common use in most coalfields. This is attested to even in Co. Durham where it is clear from the coroner's summing up comments regarding the 1909 Burns Pit (West Stanley) disaster, that numerous collieries in that district were already in the practice of using lamp tokens. Such tokens not only acted to indicate which lamp was commonly used by which miner but more importantly acted as a means of recording the number of men working underground on any particular shift. This was essential information not only to colliery management, who used the tokens as a form of work attendance tally, but more importantly as an indicator to rescue teams of the potential number of miners involved in the event of an explosion or other type of pit disaster.

By 1913 the use of checking systems in British mines had been made mandatory by a supplementary amendment to the *Coal Mines Act of 1911*. Most of the early checking systems employed only one token (usually of brass) per collier. This token was often referred to as a lamp check / token and was often taken home with each collier at the end of each working day. Such lamp tokens were handed in to the lamp room attendance at the start of each shift in exchange for a safety lamp

South Wellington Coin Club founded 1997

bearing the same identification number as that on the collier's personal check. At the end of his shift the collier would retrieve his check from a tally board in the lamp room or alternatively directly from the lamp room attendant in exchange for the safe return of his lamp.

Probably the most commonly collected type of mining para-numismatics are known by several names depending on which coalfield or even region of a coalfield they emanated. Common names for such items included: "Checks", "Tokens", "Tallies", "Motties", "Pins", "Tickets" or "Passes". In the following brief description they will be referred to by one of their more common titles, i.e. "Pit or Colliery Checks". Although the vast number of such checks emanate from the coal-mining industry, they were also used in some metalliferous ore mines and some stone quarries. They were used for a wide variety of identification and tallying purposes.

In all, over 22 different uses for checks have been recorded in the British Coal Industry since c.1900, and several more obscure ones before this date. Amongst the various post-1900 check examples are the following types:

- Lamp issuing checks / tokens
- Cage-riding and manpower deployment checks
- Pay checks / tickets
- Canteen checks / tokens
- Pithead bath tokens and identification checks
- Cycle shed tokens — for the identification of individual bicycles
- Wood removal passes / tickets — these were used in certain Welsh pits prior to 1947 as a gate pass to prove that wood off cuts were not being removed from the colliery premises illegally
- Explosives container identification tallies
- Shot firing sentry identification checks
- Tube tokens / checks (often called putters and hewers tokens in the North East)
- Morphia key tallies / fobs
- Railway and bus free travel passes / tokens
- Miners Association membership checks / badges
- Emergency rescue team deployment tallies
- Work tool identification / issuing tokens
- School payment fee tokens (North Derbyshire Coalfield only)
- Commemorative and / or promotional checks / fobs
- Stall checks
- Concessionary coal delivery checks

